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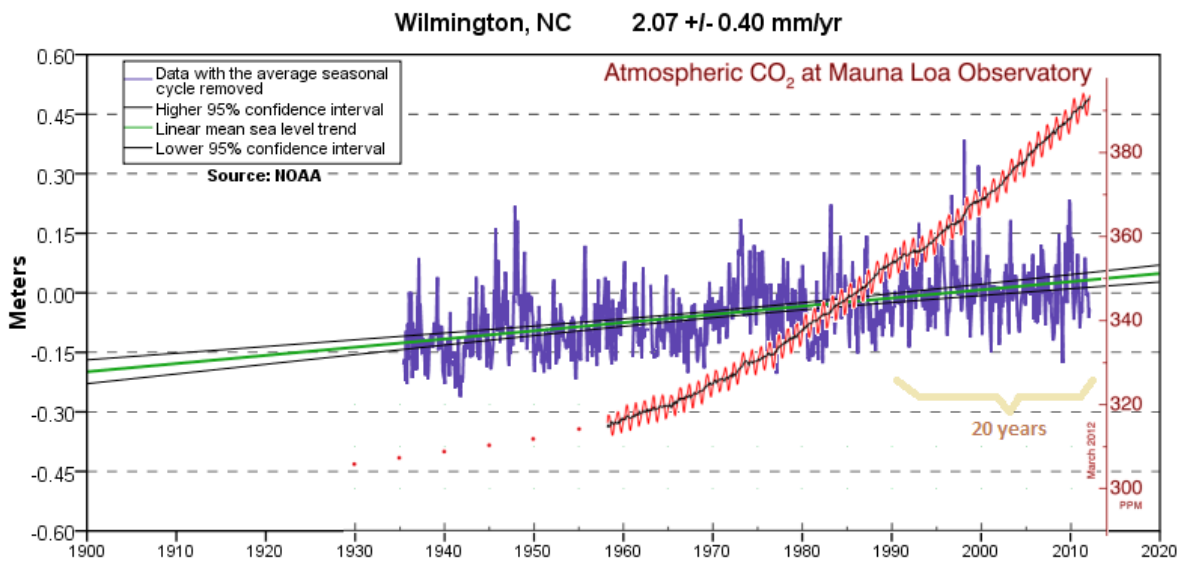
June 12, 2012

Just the facts: What you need to know about HB 819

Critics of HB 819 can't argue with its scientific basis, so they're resorting to name-calling, and accusing the bill's sponsors of being "anti-science." The truth is that what they really object to is the bill's requirement that coastal regulations be consistent with scientific evidence.

NC-20 did not write this bill, but we support it. The point of the bill is to conform rulemaking to actual scientific evidence, which just makes good sense.

At Wilmington we have 77 years of sea level data from North Carolina's best long-term tide gauge. The average sea level rise there over 77 years is just 2 mm/year (8 inches/century), and zero for the last 20 years. This graph juxtaposes rising CO₂ levels with sea level at Wilmington, which has obviously been unaffected by CO₂ increases:



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Contrary to the predictions of Climate Movement activists, the best scientific evidence is that the last 3/4 century of CO₂ emissions and other human activities have resulted in no acceleration (increase) in rate of sea level rise at all. Dr. James Houston, Director Emeritus, Engineer Research and Development Center, US Army Corps of Engineers, and his co-author, Dr. Robert Dean, Professor Emeritus, University of Florida, concluded in a recent paper (which Dr. Dean summarized in a recent presentation to NC 20):

“The results of all of our analyses are consistent - there is no indication of an overall world-wide sea level acceleration in the 20th Century data. Rather, it appears that a weak deceleration was present.”

Climate Movement activists say that we are endangering the coast by not planning for a theoretical massive increase in water levels. (Remember, the 39” they want to plan for would be added to previous flood levels for the final flood plain parameter.) In fact, it is the other way around. The initial CRC draft, to which we objected, included the following statement:

“...new private development should be designed and constructed to accommodate sea-level rise impacts within the structure’s design life...”

The cost of that policy, if based on an implausible 39" rise in 90 years, would be incalculable for our 20 coastal counties. 39" in 90 years is more than 5 times the current rate of sea level rise for much of the NC coast. 39" of fake sea level rise would turn thousands of square miles into fake floodplains. The cost of roads, buildings, and public and private infrastructure would escalate dramatically, not to mention the “hidden” cost of loss of additional investment in coastal counties, which include some of the poorest areas of the State, because the expense of preparing for such an outcome would suck the coffers dry.

Here are some papers which have reported the lack of acceleration in rate of sea level rise:

1. Holgate SJ (2007). On the decadal rates of sea level change during the twentieth century. *Geophysical Research Letters*. 34, L01602.
2. Wunsch R, Ponte R and Heimbach P (2007). Decadal trends in sea level patterns: 1993-2004. *Journal of Climatology*. 5889-5911.
3. Wenzel M and Schröter J (2010). Reconstruction of regional mean sea level anomalies from tide gauges using neural networks. *Journal of Geophysical Research – Oceans*. 115:C08013.
4. Houston JR and Dean RG (2011). Sea-Level Acceleration Based on U.S. Tide Gauges and Extensions of Previous Global-Gauge Analyses. *Journal of Coastal Research*. 27:409–417.
5. Watson PJ (2011). Is There Evidence Yet of Acceleration in Mean Sea Level Rise around Mainland Australia?. *Journal of Coastal Research*. 27:368 – 377.
6. Boretti A (2012a). Short Term Comparison of Climate Model Predictions and Satellite Altimeter Measurements of Sea Levels. *Coastal Engineering*, 60:319-322.
7. Boretti A (2012b). Is there any support in the long term tide gauge data to the claims that parts of Sydney will be swamped by rising sea levels? *Coastal Engineering* 64, pp. 161-167.
8. Mörner N-A (2010a). Sea level changes in Bangladesh new observational facts. *Energy and Environment*. 21(3):235-249.
9. Mörner N-A (2010b). Some problems in the reconstruction of mean sea level and its changes with time. *Quaternary International*. 221(1-2):3-8.
10. Mörner N-A (2010c). There Is No Alarming Sea Level Rise! *21st Century Science & Technology*. Fall 2010:7-17.
11. Mörner N-A, (2011a). Setting the frames of expected future sea level changes by exploring past geological sea level records. Chapter of book D Easterbrook, *Evidence-Based Climate Science*, 2011 Elsevier B.V. ISBN: 978-0-12-385956-3.
12. Mörner N-A, (2011b). The Maldives: A measure of sea level changes and sea level ethics. Chapter of book D Easterbrook, *Evidence-Based Climate Science*, 2011 Elsevier B.V. ISBN: 978-0-12-385956-3.
13. Hughes W (2012). Continued existence of Maori canals near Blenheim in New Zealand indicates a stable relative sea level over 200 years. [Internet].
14. Daly J (2003). *Tasmanian Sea Levels: The 'Isle of the Dead' Revisited*. [Internet].
15. Daly J (2004). *Testing the Waters: A Report on Sea Levels for the Greening Earth Society*. [Internet].